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MEMOIRS

OF

MARGARET NICHOLSON.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

MARGARET NICHOLSON

attempting to Stab the King

Published as the Act directs for I. Ridgway

AUTHENTIC

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

MARGARET NICHOLSON,

WHO ATTEMPTED TO

STAB HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY

WITH A KNIFE,

AS HE WAS

ALIGHTING FROM HIS *CARRIAGE*

At St. JAMES's, on WEDNESDAY, AUG. 2, 1786;

LIKEWISE

The Whole of her Examination before the PRIVY COUNCIL, on the Motives which induced her to attempt a Crime of so horrid a Nature.

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MDCC LXXXVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

MEMOIRS

OF

MARGARET NICHOLSON.

AMID the many acts of delinquency which will blacken the annals of the preſent times, there are none of a deeper dye than the monſtrous attempt on the life of our moſt gra-

cious Sovereign.—Regicide and parricide are among thoſe crimes whoſe ſuperiority of horror ſtrike on the human heart with the utmoſt dread, and fill it with the moſt poignant ſenſations. Nor is it to be wondered at, when we conſider the veneration due to the parental character, whether in a natural or political relation. —To the former we look up in the helpleſſneſs of infancy for ſupport, aſſiſtance, and advice, whilſt each revolving day, by adding to the number of our obligations, increaſes our gratitude, eſteem, and love; and memory, on every retroſpective view, ſhews us under ſome natural embarraſſment, which muſt have been abſolutely

ſolutely inſurmountable, but for the interpoſition of parental tenderneſs; hence we habitually conſider our parents as not only under divine Providence the authors of our being, but, through the ſame benign permiſſion, the directors and preſervers of that being, whoſe value is enhanced by the inculcation of morals imbibed from their care.

THE political relation is neither leſs ſtrong, nor leſs affectionately binding; we contemplate the man whoſe boſom glows with love for all, with a degree of awe only ſecond to that with which we contemplate the attributes of the DIVINITY, whoſe

immediate delegate we obſerve in a Sovereign acting on principles of general philanthropy, ſedulouſly careful for the ſafety of millions—making all their wants, all their griefs, all their diſtreſſes, his own; and foregoing the indulgence of all private felicities, to enſure the general happineſs—conſidering a kingdom as his own family, and preſerving every individual in his heart with the ſame affectionate tenderneſs he feels for his own more immediate offspring, who ſhare in his care, his love, and his protection, but in common with the more multitudinous objects of national anxiety. Thus guarded by the ſenſations of every heart, is it aſtoniſhing

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that every heart recoils at the thought of aſſaulting lives held ſacred by the wiſe and good of every nation? No. Surely then, that man who can make an invidious attempt on lives thus doubly dear, bears the ſtamp of a fiend, rather than of humanity; but what muſt we think of a woman, who, renouncing all the decent tenderneſſes of her ſex, ruſhes on the life of her Sovereign, even though ſurrounded with his guards—and that too at the very moment when, with the moſt beneficent humanity, he extends his hand to receive from her a ſuppoſitious memorial, thereby manifeſting a wiſh to ſerve her? Can we imagine that ſuch an attempt could be made

by an unprovoked and unintereſted individual? Yet this is poſitively the caſe, as will fully appear in the following Memoirs, the authenticity of which is beyond a doubt.

MRS. MARGARET NICHOLSON is the daughter of a Mr. Nicholſon, a barber at Stockton-upon-Tees, a great market town in the county of Durham. From the indulgence of her parents ſhe received an education ſomething ſuperior to that uſually given to the daughters of ordinary tradeſmen in that part of the country. She was taught to read, write, and work at her needle; in the two former articles ſhe acquitted herſelf with that degree of mediocrity

which

which neither entitled her to praiſe nor cenſure; but in the latter ſhe was a perfect adept, working with that delicacy and ſkill as to have been able to earn a comfortable ſubſiſtence, even in theſe times of exceſſive dearneſs. Thus qualified, ſhe was ſent to ſervice, as the ſituation of the family would not allow her to remain at home.

To trace her through all the various viciſſitudes to which the life of a female ſervant is liable, is a taſk too arduous for the writer of ſo ſmall a volume as this; ſuffice it to ſay, that about twenty years ago ſhe came to London, being then not more than

eighteen

eighteen years of age, but poſſeſſing a ſhare of boldneſs, cunning, and intrepid addreſs, ſeldom to be found in women at a more advanced period of life. She, however, got into the ſervice of Mr. Taylor, a gentleman of diſtinguiſhed reſpectability, with whom ſhe lived and behaved with great modeſty and diligence, ever preſerving that cautionary reſerve which is a woman's beſt guard. Here ſhe procured the eſteem of her fellow-ſervants, who, notwithſtanding an invincible obſtinacy, and a kind of overbearing pride, which ſeemed to be the indelible characteriſtic of her mind, were yet attached to her for her ſobriety, honeſty, and induſtry,

work

work or hours never being an objection with her, as ſhe conceived it her duty to perform the buſineſs of her employers without murmuring, and which ſhe was peculiarly adapted to do from the regularity of her conſtitution.

Her next place was with Mrs. Boothby, a lady well known in the polite world. Here ſhe lived ſome time; but, being diſmiſſed, was entertained in the family of Miſs Rice, a lady of family and fortune. The occaſion of her diſmiſſion from Mrs. Boothby does not however appear to have ariſen from any very reprehenſible action, as on her quitting Miſs Rice,

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the aforenamed lady not only received her again into her ſervice, but actually intended to appoint her to the immediate attendance of Miſs Boothby, who was at this time grown up; but it was now that Margaret's natural temper broke forth, and ſhe firſt evinced thoſe principles which cannot fail to brand her name with infamy, and while they embitter, perhaps ſhorten the days of an aged parent, will affix to her whole family indelible and laſting regret; not that I would by any means be thought to infer, that ſhe avowed, or even intimated her horrid purpoſe, nor even that that act of outrage was then formed in her mind: It is but

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by ſlow advances that the human heart attains the ultimatum of guilt, and hardens itſelf ſo far againſt the feelings of nature as to meditate, much leſs to perpetrate crimes of ſuch monſtrous magnitude. I only mean that this appearance of probable promotion kindled the latent ſparks of pride which lay hid in the receſſes of her heart, and raiſed them to a flame of ſuch violence, as to render her behaviour intolerable. The moſt arrogant airs of inſolent ſuperiority now took place of that readineſs to oblige which had once marked her whole conduct; and that impenetrable reſerve which had formerly been a diſtinguiſhed part of her

character,

character, was now encreaſed to the moſt diſdainful contempt. She no longer regarded her fellow ſervants as her equals, but treated them with inſolence and ſcorn, aſſuming airs of importance and authority, and thus rendering herſelf obnoxious to that family where ſhe had been received with ſuch peculiar indulgence; theſe meaſures however militated againſt her, and ſhe was at length finally diſcharged from Mrs. Boothby.

LADY SEBRIGHT hired her from Mrs. Boothby's, whoſe humanity led her to give her as favourable a character as her conduct would admit, and as the moſt exceptionable part of

that conduct had been in department from which Mrs. Boothby's ſituation removed her, ſhe could not be ſuppoſed to be acquainted with all her aſtoniſhing flights, that lady was therefore highly commendable in ſpeaking of her in ſuch terms as might enable her to obtain an honeſt livelihood But that vehemence of paſſion, which had now broke through all reſtraints of artifice and policy: pride, which is ever a dangerous companion, but more eſpecially ſo to uninformed minds, now ruled with the moſt unreſtrained dominion: her deportment was authoritative, arbitrary, and deciſive, on all occaſions proclaiming and boaſting her own conſequence,

and pretending to the greateſt importance. Such a ſyſtem procured her diſgrace, and ſhe went no more to ſervice.

It is but juſtice here to remark, that in every family where ſhe lived her honeſty, ſobriety, and chaſtity were unqueſtionable and exemplary, ſhe never having ſtood charged with any act of peculation, intemperance, or indecency; on the reverſe, ſhe fulfilled every truſt repoſed in her with a degree of diligence and fidelity, that would ſtamp a value on the moſt exalted character; her acquaintance were few, and thoſe the moſt reſpectable that her ſituation allowed;

lowed; among theſe ſhe always preſerved the moſt rigid decorum, never treſpaſſing on any occaſion whatever on the moſt trifling rules of decency, nor ever tattling on the affairs of thoſe families in whoſe ſervice ſhe was employed. In ſhort, a prudence more than ordinarily circumſpect was the moſt remarkable *trait* in her character, after that ruinous pride which has not only been deſtructive to herſelf, but had well nigh involved theſe kingdoms in ruin.

THIS was her laſt place, and on her diſmiſal ſhe received ſeveral marks of the approbation of her principals, who have ſtill continued her friends

and employers, and whoſe orders have ever been attended to with punctuality and diligence.

DURING the five years that ſhe reſided in Oxford Road, her behaviour was ſober and decent, working with the moſt conſtant application at her needle, and never mixing in any parties of pleaſure or expence that could be reproached or ridiculed. On the contrary, her whole demeanour ſeemed perfectly regular, juſt, and irreproachable, living with her relations on terms of the higheſt amity, and being guarded from the danger of improper connections by that pride which has however been in the end

moſt

moſt tremendous in its conſequences and effects.

She was now her own miſtreſs, and her behaviour was ſuch as exempted her from every degree of cenſure, nor had ſhe at this time, nor indeed at any later period that I can learn, any marks of inſanity in her conduct, but ſeemed at every time, and on all occaſions, capable of ſuporting her part in converſation, and of acting as a rational being: no irregular ſtarts of imagination, no actions of extravagance, nor no ſingularities, either in dreſs or addr ever appearing that could warran ſuppoſition of that nature.

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From Oxford-road ſhe removed to Mary-le-bone-lane, ſtill preſerving the ſame moderation, and an equanimity of temper not at all characteriſing a maniac, except a habit of talking to herſelf, which is well known to be the practice of many perſons of ſound intellects. At this place, and at her former lodgings, ſhe often mentioned a cauſe ſhe ſaid ſhe had depending, and aſſerting her own conſequence with a degree of *hauteur* no ways conſiſtent with her confined circumſtances: She had, however, enough to preſerve the moſt fect complaiſance for her employ- though ſhe frequently wearied landlords with importunities to preſent

preſent a petition to his Majeſty in her behalf, who, ſhe ſaid, ſhe was ſure would provide for her. On the refuſal of her firſt landlord, ſhe mentioned the buſineſs to Mr. Watſon, but that gentleman not thinking her pretenſions of any moment, diſſuaded her from the attempt, at the ſame time exhorting her in the moſt friendly manner, to purſue thoſe means to obtain a livelihood which God had ſo mercifully put into her hands, very juſtly obſerving, that though the benevolent diſpoſition of his Majeſty was without exception, yet that in times like the preſent, when general calamity prevailed, and when the widows and orphans of thoſe men who

who had loſt their lives in his ſervice were in want of ſupport, that however liberal his Majeſty's intentions, it was impoſſible his bounty ſhould extend to private and unrecommended individuals, eſpecially to ſuch whoſe claims did not ſeem founded on any particular merit, either of theirs or their anceſtors; adding, that if ſhe had either from perſonal or connective merit, any pretenſion to the royal patronage, ſhe might eaſily convey ſuch pretenſions to the throne through the medium of ſome of thoſe families in whoſe ſervice ſhe had lived.

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She was however too ſubtle to comply with this advice, and always evaded it by alledging that it was a matter on which ſhe had never ſpoken when reſident in their families, and that it was at preſent highly improper, as if ſhe ſhould offend the ladies whoſe goodneſs employed her, ſhe ſhould undoubtedly loſe their favours, and by being deprived of the means of obtaining her living be reduced to extreme diſtreſs, and rendered totally incapable of purſuing her claim.

Thus ſhe baffled her beſt friends, whom ſhe ſtill continued to perſuade that ſhe had a large and undoubted claim upon government, but declined

giving

giving any ſpecific information, and at length undertook to make a perſonal application to the King. For this purpoſe ſhe prepared a petition and delivered it ſome time in April; but it not being attended to, ſhe gave another the latter end of May or beginning of June, and another in July, in which ſhe intimated her deſperate intention in the following remarkable words; "If your Ma-"jeſty wiſhes to prevent *regicide*, you "muſt comply with the prayer of "my petition." What this prayer was, does not fully appear, though it is moſt probable, that it was for ſome pecuniary relief; but as the King had not found it adviſeable to grant

to

to her requeſt what appeared improper or unneceſſary, ſo he diſregarded the threat, never thinking it poſſible for any mind to be under the influence of a ſpirit ſo truly diabolic as to be ſtimulated to ſuch an act of dangerous outrage. Happy would it be for mankind in general, if their paſſions were regulated by the ſame equality of ſoul which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhes the father of his people! and happy indeed had it been for Mrs. Nicholſon and her family, if ſhe had not fallen a prey to the moſt unaccountable frenzy that ever poſſeſt the human brain.

An attempt of ſuch a daring and deſperate nature muſt naturally excite the curioſity of all ranks of people; and it is in order to gratify that curioſity that the writer of theſe memoirs aſſumes the pen, having with the moſt unremitting aſſiduity collected every circumſtance that can be relied on, and determined to reſtrain this narrative to ſuch particulars as can be vouched from the firſt authorities.

On Wedneſday, Auguſt 2d, Mrs. Nicholſon left her own houſe about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and proceeding to St. James's, continued walking up and down the park and

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in the avenues of the palace till about half paſt twelve, at which time the people began to collect round the garden gate in order to obtain a ſight of their much loved Monarch. Her more than ordinary earneſt ſolicitude to obtain the moſt convenient ſituation, naturally produced ſome enquiries from the perſons aſſembled on the occaſion; thoſe ſhe anſwered by ſaying, that ſhe had a petition to preſent to the King. On this, way was immediately made for her, and ſhe took her ſtand between two ladies, ſtrangers to town, and who were anxious to ſee his Majeſty before their return to Cheſhire. During the time ſhe waited here, ſhe

ſeemed much unuſually anxious, and even teaſingly ſo with regard to the nearneſs of her ſituation. On being aſked if ſhe was a widow, ſhe ſaid no; but that ſhe had preſented petitions before; that the King knew what ſhe wanted, and knew that it was her right. She ſeemed perfectly calm, collected, and rational, and her anxiety with regard to her ſituation was imputed to that uneaſineſs which muſt naturally occupy the mind in the criſis of any important buſineſs, ſuch as ſhe ſaid, and which, it was imagined, ſhe had at preſent upon her hands, and which the good nature of all around determined not to impede; even the yeomen, with a complaiſance

ſance that does them much credit, were ſtudious to grant her every accommodation in their power, and ſhe was placed in the moſt convenient ſituation, every one giving way to her and wiſhing her ſucceſs. Good God! how vain and futile are human wiſhes? What would have been the conſequence of ſuch ſucceſs? No leſs than the death of our moſt gracious Monarch, whoſe benignity beaming forth on every occaſion, even extended itſelf to the intended aſſaſſin. Accept, oh Almighty King of Kings, the ſincere and humble thanks of grateful millions, who adore and reverence that unerring Providence, whoſe divine interpoſi-

tion protected the father of his people from the hand of a frantic regicide.

THE Sovereign arrived about one o'clock, and Mrs. Nicholſon immediately came forward and preſented her petition, which ſhe held in her right hand, but whilſt his Majeſty bent forward to receive it, ſhe attempted to ſtab him. The inſtrument glanced between his Majeſty's coat and waiſtcoat, ſlightly wounding the latter, and would moſt probably have taken a deeper effect, but from the condeſcending manner in which his Majeſt received the ſuppoſed petition, he being in the very act of bowing to

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the deſperado, who, without ſhewing any the moſt trivial marks of fear, renewed the attempt, and actually raiſed her arm a ſecond time againſt the Royal life. At this moment the attendant yeomen arreſted the malign effort, and Mr. Topper, his Majeſty's footman ſeized the weapon, which was, upon examination, found to be an ivory handled deſert knife, worn extremely thin, and ground to a ſharp point, newly cleaned and ſharpened. She made ſome faint efforts to diſengage herſelf, but finding them ineffectual, ſubmitted without any apparent diſmay to the ſuperiority of force which ſurrounded her, and from which ſhe ſaw it was impoſſible for her to eſcape.

The king, with great preſence of mind, inſtantly declared himſelf unhurt, and with the moſt exalted humanity, intereſted himſelf in the welfare of the woman, ſaying aloud, "I have received no injury, don't "hurt the woman, ſhe muſt cer- "tainly be mad."

She was immediately conveyed to the guard chamber, and the reſentment and curioſity of every one being awakened by her diabolic attempt, ſhe was interrogated with ſome roughneſs, but remained perfectly unconcerned, only bidding them not to be impertinent, nor trouble her with queſtions ſhe was not bound to anſwer;

ſwer; ſhe had motives for her conduct.

FROM the guard room ſhe was removed to the Queen's antichamber, where ſhe ſtill retained the moſt perfect compoſure; and on being queſtioned by ſeveral of the nobility, declared with arrogance and ſcorn, that her motives would juſtify her actions; but that ſhe was not bound to anſwer perſons unauthoriſed to examine her, neither would ſhe; when before a judge ſhe ſhould make a proper defence.

THE Council was almoſt inſtantly convened, at which the Chancellor of the

the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State, with the Dukes of Leeds, Chandos, and Montagu, the Lord Privy Seal, Earls of Chesterfield and Courtown, Lords George Cavendish, Amherst, Mulgrave, Walsingham, and Hawkesborough were present, attended by the Crown Lawyers.

Nicholson, previous to her examination, was taken to a private apartment, where two women belonging to the Palace assisted to strip and examine her; but neither weapon or information was to be found upon her. She then put on her clothes, which were neat, plain, and decently genteel; after which she was conducted

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to the apartment aſſigned for the Board of Green Cloth, where the Council were ſitting.

On her entering the room, ſhe made a ſlight honor, without ſhewing the leaſt ſymptom of fear. On being aſked her name, ſhe replied, Margaret Nicholſon.

Q. Where do you live?

A. At Mr. Fiſk's, ſtationer, the corner of Mary-le-Bone lane, near Portman-ſquare.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. I get my bread by working at my needle.

Q. What

Q. What could induce you to make ſuch a tremendous attempt? do you know the conſequences?

A. I ſhall anſwer before a Judge; I do not ſee any here who has a right to demand ſuch anſwer.

Council. We have an undoubted right.

Priſoner. What right?

Council. We are of his Majeſty's Privy Council.

Priſoner. Can you paſs ſentence upon me?

Council. No; but we can commit you to priſon.

Priſoner.

Priſoner. Very well; do ſo. I ſhall anſwer in a court of judicature; but I have no right to do it here.

Council. You could have no motive for what you have done.

Priſoner. Then I ſhould not have attempted it.

Q. What could be your motive?

A. The King knows my motive.

Q. How does the King know?

A. Becauſe he has been informed.

Q. Who informed his Majeſty?

A. I did.

Q. How?

Q. How?

A. I told him I would kill him, if he did not do me juſtice.

Q. What juſtice?

A. He knows.

Council. We have a right to know, Mrs. Nicholſon.

A. You have no right to know.—The King has no right to the crown; I have; and if I do not have juſtice, England will be in blood for a thouſand generations.

Council. You talk at a ſtrange rate! What right have you to the crown?

A. I ſhall

A. I ſhall anſwer in a proper place; but the King knows.

Council. You muſt anſwer here.

A. I ſhall not.

Q. Pray, what was in your petition?

A. Nothing.

Q. Who wrote it?

A. I did.

Q. Will you write the ſuperſcription again?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Becauſe you can't make me.

Q. How came you to preſent a petition to his Majeſty without any writing in it?

A. Becauſe I had no other means to get at him.

Q. Was it your intention to kill his Majeſty?

A. Yes.

Q. For what reaſon?

A. He knows very well.

Q. We wiſh to know?

A. I will anſwer before a Judge.

AFTER

AFTER ſome more queſtions, ſhe was ordered to withdraw; and Mr. Fiſk was ſent for, who depoſed, That ſhe had lodged with him for ſome time, and that ſhe always appeared an inoffenſive and induſtrious woman.—To the matter of inſanity he could anſwer nothing; he had never remarked any thing of the kind, except her frequently *talking to herſelf*; it was probable Mr. Paule, with whom ſhe had lodged before ſhe came to him, might know more.

MR. PAULE was ſent for; he could give no information farther than Mr. Fiſk.

Her mother and brother were ſent for.—They declared the ſtate of her mind to be very unſettled; ſaid ſhe was the moſt inoffenſive creature upon earth; and expreſſed, both in their conduct and demeanor, all that ſurpriſe and affliction which they muſt naturally feel on ſuch a melancholy event.

On their withdrawing, it was debated in Council how to diſpoſe of her.—To commit her for a ſhort time, was unconſtitutional; to commit her *in toto* for trial, if truly a lunatic, was both needleſs and inhuman; and to diſcharge her was equally unſafe and impolitic: ſhe was

therefore

therefore delivered into the cuſtody of a meſſenger, who took her to his houſe in Half-moon-ſtreet, Piccadilly. Here ſhe was viſited by Doctors Monro, father and ſon; they thought her intellects deranged, but would not venture to pronounce with aſſurance, without farther obſervation.

EVERY poſſible means have been taken to inveſtigate this alarming affair; her apartments have been ſearched, but nothing found in them that can tend to an eclairciſement: all there is enveloped in the moſt impenetrable obſcurity, and ſhe ſtill perſiſts in aſſerting her right. This we

are well aſſured of, that her conduct is moſt decidedly myſterious; for however the effects of madneſs may have ſtimulated her to the atrocious attempt, it appears to have been the effect of long premeditation and deep reſolve, having been conducted with a degree of ſyſtematic regularity which muſt certainly have taken effect, had the inſtrument of intended death been ſtronger, or the blow given with the right hand inſtead of the left.

THE blow, though happily ineffectual, was nevertheleſs like the ſhock of electricity; it vibrated through the whole body, from the metropolis to the moſt diſtant and unimportant

tant petty village in the extremities of the kingdom: all felt, all trembled at the ſhock, and recovered with a painfully pleaſing ſenſation from its ſeverity.

The alarm was inſtantly given, and ſpread with all the avidity ſo euſtomary on thoſe occaſions, not without exaggeration, and even reached Windſor before the expreſs diſpatched for the purpoſe of acquainting her Majeſty with the circumvention of the daring effort. It had been communicated from mouth to mouth till it reached the Royal reſidence; and being told with ſome additional circumſtances of horror to a lady in an

apartment

apartment adjoining to that in which the Queen and Princeſſes were ſitting, ſhe exclaimed in a paſſion of grief, Oh God of heaven! What? Aſſaſſinate the King! This dreadful ejaculation reached the ears of the Royal Perſonages in the next apartment, whoſe diſtreſs of mind can better be imagined than deſcribed! Every ſoft, every affectionate and tender idea ruſhed upon their diſordered minds! The King, the Father, and the Huſband, were lamented with the moſt ſincere and poignant grief. But on a courier arriving from St. James's with an authentic account, this grief ſubſided, and gratitude and thanks to the divine Diſpoſer of all events took

place

place of affliction, horror, and deſpair.

An expreſs was likewiſe ſent off to his Royal Highneſs, the Prince of Wales, at Brighthelmſtone, who departed momently for Windſor, and ruſhing into the apartment where the King and Queen were ſitting, embraced his Royal Parents with an energy of joy which only the great and liberal can feel, which ſuch only can imagine, but which no pen can define.

What were the feelings of the parental and filial hearts in ſuch a momentous, ſuch an alarming criſis

of

of affairs? let the candid and humane conceive, whilſt I, unable to deſcribe the affecting ſcene, will pour the tear of loyalty and love, as commemorary of the enraptured interview which muſt have been delightful even to agony.

But to return to the infatuated woman: Her apartment, nor the confeſſion of herſelf, nor her acquaintance, not having produced any thing either to ſubſtantiate a charge of treaſon, although the overt act was directly in point and inconteſtible, nor yet to authoriſe the opinion of lunacy, which could alone be her extenuation. She was ſtill continued

under.

under the cuſtody of the meſſenger, and watched with the utmoſt circumſpection.

She was at times convulſed, ſometimes wept, and often made uſe of the names of two noblemen, no leſs reſpectable from their rank in life, than for theſe acquirements and virtue which dignify and adorn human nature, the incoherence of her ſpeeches, and her extreme careleſſneſs with regard to her awful ſituation, at length induced the gentlemen of the faculty to pronounce her inſane.

Her preſent ſituation is extremely embarraſſing to Miniſtry, as though

ſhe appears at preſent abſolutely deranged in her faculties, yet there is no poſitive evidence of her having been ſo at any time antecedent to the terrible adventure that has given riſe to theſe memoirs, except we allow the attempt itſelf to be a confirmation of the aſſertion of her friends, whoſe ſituation muſt be truly diſtreſſing, there not being any poſſibly alternative, but an ignominious death, with all its concomitant horrors, and indignities; or a perpetual ſequeſtration from the world, and a commitment to an hoſpital of lunatics for life; for the people will never bear to ſee at large a woman who has rendered herſelf

herſelf in ſo eminent a degree the terror of ſociety.

It muſt certainly be needleſs to obſerve, that the levee was on Friday unuſually crowded; the nobility, who were within reach of the news, poſting to town to pour their congratulations into the boſom of a Prince, whoſe complaiſance, benevolence, philanthropy, and punctual diſcharge of every duty as a King and a man, whether religious, moral, or political, has enthroned him in the hearts of his people, and wove the deareſt garland for a monarch's brow, his ſubjects love.

EVEN the foreign miniſters diſpenſing on this memorable event, with that equitette which in general prevents their attendance on Fridays, mingled with the joyful, the happy circle, and joined in the univerſal prayer of "GOD SAVE THE KING! "LONG LIVE THE KING! MAY "THE KING LIVE FOR EVER!— *Amen.*

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

APPENDIX.

A CANTERBURY TALE.

I WAS at Canterbury, ſitting down to a good ſupper, when news was brought me, that on Wedneſday, about two o'clock in the afternoon, twenty deſperadoes, armed with daggers, ruſhed into the Preſence Chamber at St. James's, and put the King, the two Secretaries of State, the Preſident of the Council, and the Lord Chancellor, to death; that they afterwards proceeded to Buckingham-houſe, where they ſeized upon the Queen, and committed her and the three elder Princeſſes to the Tower; that the Guards were overpowered by about ten thouſand Volunteers from Ireland, headed by Napper Tandy; and that Mr. Fox, in woman's cloaths, ſupported by the inhabitants of Weſtminſter, had poſſeſſed himſelf of the Bank, the Crown, and the Jewel Office.

TERRIFIED at ſuch alarming intelligence, as I had a conſiderable property in the Funds, I ordered a chaiſe, and rode poſt to Dover. The people at Dover had not heard a word of Napper Tandy and the Iriſh; the ſtory there was, that a man, dreſſed like a gypſey, had, under pretence of telling ſome of the Ladies in Waiting their fortunes, gained admittance to the Caſtle of Windſor, where he concealed himſelf until the dead hour of the night, when he put all the Royal Family to death.—That, in conſequence of this, there was a rebellion, and the Guards being drawn out, above ſix hundred people were ſhot dead upon the ſpot.

MY fears upon this grew ſtill greater, and I proceeded poſt to Rocheſter. Here the matter began to mend, and things appeared not quite ſo bad. The ſtory at Rocheſter was, that his Majeſty, in paſſing through Buckingham-gate, was ſhot by a

Scotch ſmuggler, diſguiſed like a fruit-woman; that the ball penetrated the breaſt, and lodging in the centre of the heart, his Majeſty died inſtantaneouſly. That on the piſtol being fired, an armed body of ſmugglers appeared, and galloping through the Park, were met at the Treaſury door by about two thouſand more, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Maſter of the Rolls in their cuſtody, tied back to back. That theſe two unhappy gentlemen were made faſt to the long cannon on the parade, which being previouſly loaded, was then diſcharged, and the bodies blown into a million of pieces. That the ſmugglers then in great numbers marched to the city, where they ſeized upon the Court of Aldermen, and as many Directors of the India Company as they could find, all of whom they put to death, except Brooke Watſon, who was tied by his wooden leg to the top of the Monument. There was not a word of Mr. Fox or Napper

Tandy at Rocheſter, nor of the Queen nor the Princeſſes. "Poor Watſon," ſaid I to myſelf, (~~and it blew bitter hard~~) "what "will become of thee in this ſtorm!"

STILL anxious, I poſted to Chatham, where I thought I ſhould arrive at the truth, Chatham being a garriſoned town. Here I had full confirmation, and all the particulars from the landlord, who had them from a ſerjeant's wife that waſhes for a Colonel who had had an expreſs from London.

THE affair, as related at Chatham, terrified me with horror. A lady, who ſaid ſhe was a Ruſſian Princeſs, begged to preſent a petition to his Majeſty. She held it in her hand in the form of a long roll of parchment, which his Majeſty bent forward to receive, when the treacherous Princeſs fired off a piſtol that was concealed within the roll, and which having four rifled barrels, each loaded with ball, two of them ſtruck

his

his Majeſty in the head, penetrated the *os frontis*, lodged in the *pia mater*, and occaſioned inſtant death. But it was not alone the King that fell; a footman and a yeoman of the Guards were mortally wounded; and the Princeſs, availing herſelf of the general conſternation, drew forth another piſtol and a dagger, and ruſhing up into the Council-room, there ſlew the poor Attorney-General, as he was altering and amending a letter from Mr. Eden, about the Commercial Treaty. Mr. Pitt, on ſeeing this bloody-minded deed, fled to the door, but in his confuſion, not knowing how it opened, he was delayed, and unfortunately met the fate of the Attorney-General, being ſtabbed in the neck, juſt in the ſpot where Caſſius ſtruck the firſt Cæſar. The ſtab was ſo violent, and the dagger ſo long, that the point penetrated the lungs, and cut ſeveral of the ligaments of the heart. The undiſmayed Princeſs then made her way into St. James's-ſtreet, where meeting an Enſign of the Guards,

ſhe knocked him down with the butt end of her piſtol, and giving him a kick on the loins, broke his back, and he expired in great agonies. The troops were all ordered out, and every thing wore the appearance of confuſion. In twelve minutes and three quarters from the time of ſhooting the King, the Princeſs was mounted on a black horſe, and dreſſed in regimentals, at the head of a thouſand German cavalry, who were ſupported by eight thouſand four hundred and eighty-eight French infantry, excluſive of commiſſioned and non-commiſſioned officers, drums and fifes, at the head of whom was the Pretender, as Commander in Chief. Both armies met in Hyde Park, where the Guards did miracles; but, overpowered by numbers, they were obliged to retreat; and had not the Providence of God ſent the Maſter-General of the Ordnance to Tyburn, with a new howitzer, to cover their retreat, they muſt all have been cut to pieces. There his Grace proved the uſe of Fortifications, by

getting

getting behind an old cow-houſe, and from thence ſo annoying the Pretender's army, that they durſt not purſue the Guards. In the battle, the Ruſſian Princeſs was killed by a muſquet ſhot, and, on examination, ſhe proved to be no other than the famous Timothy Brecknock, who was ſuppoſed to be hanged at Caſtlebar ſome time ago, but who, it ſeems, was brought to life for this rebellious purpoſe. Things were in this ſtate, when the expreſs ſet off.

" Well," ſays I to myſelf, " my little " property is gone, and the national debt " will be paid off by a wipe, ſooner than " Mr. Pitt expected. There can now be " no doubt of the fact, every thing is ſo " circumſtantial." I thought it beſt, however, to proceed, and I travelled poſt without aſking a queſtion until I came to Shuter's-hill. There I thought I could plainly hear both the firing of ſmall arms, and the noiſe of the Duke of Richmond's new howitzer. I aſked the landlord how many

the

the enemy were, and whether the troops from the interior parts had arrived to ſtrengthen the royal army? The landlord ſaid he knew nothing about troops, except the damn'd troops that were quartered on him againſt the field-day. "O then," ſays I, "thank God, ſome aſſiſtance is arrived." "Aſſiſtance!" replies the landlord, "aſſiſt-"ance is of no uſe now; Tankard and his "party are routed, and the ſmugglers have "carried the day; they carried off every "thing before the troops arrived here."—The Rocheſter ſtory now occurred, and I bemoaned the fate of my poor friend Watſon, on the top of the Monument.—"And "are they really ſmugglers," ſaid I, "that "have done this bloody deed?" "Smug-"glers! aye, that they are, and ſtout fel-"lows, I'll warrant them," replied the landlord; "but they han't killed any body." My heart leaped to my mouth, and I aſked my hoſt, if the Maſter of the Rolls and the Miniſter were not blown to atoms by the great gun in the Park, and if my old ſchool-

fellow

fellow was not ſtuck on his wooden leg at the top of the Monument? The landlord was all amazement, and aſked the poſt-boy if I was mad? The poſt-boy ſaid all the road was mad, and aſked how far off the Pretender was? The landlord knew no ſuch ſign on the road; but as to the ſmugglers, they were got off, and Mr. Tankard was gone after a tobacco cart. I now found out my miſtake, and that my ſmugglers and the landlord's ſmugglers were different perſons. I therefore aſked him how ſoon he heard of the King's death, after the aſſaſſination by the Ruſſian Princeſs, and what were the particulars? He told me that I had heard the ſtory quite wrong, there was no Ruſſian Princeſs concerned; the King, he ſaid, was poiſoned by hot rolls and butter at Windſor, and dropped down dead as he was getting out of his carriage at St. James's; the baker had been taken up, and confeſſed, that Charles Fox came to him when he had the dough in the leaven, and and that he gave him ſome powder to mix with

with it, which he ſaid would make the Royal Family love him, and he accordingly put it in.—Fox was fled to Ireland.—The Queen was extremely ill; the two elder Princeſſes were dead; and the reſt of the family (for they all eat rolls and butter) were in a moſt dangerous way; things were all quiet, and an expreſs gone off for the Prince to come to town.

THIS had a wonderful effect on my mind, and I was anxious to get to town. But one of the horſes falling lame at the Green Man on Blackheath, I was induced to aſk the news there whilſt another was getting ready. There I heard that the King was ſtabbed in the belly with a butcher's knife, by one of the Eaſtern Princeſſes who was loaded with irons in India by Mr. Haſtings; that his Majeſty's bowels came out, and that he died immediately. The Princeſs was ſecured and ſent to the Tower.

A NEW

A NEW horſe being put to the chaiſe, we ſoon arrived at the Bricklayers Arms, oppoſite Kent-Bar Turnpike, where the horſes would not paſs without water. There the landlady, who is a widow, informed me that Charles Fox, diſguiſed in woman's clothes, had murdered the King, and fled to Ireland, from whence he was to bring over all the Volunteers, and Napper Tandy, to take London by ſtorm.—The vile ungrateful man!

IN about five minutes we were at Rhode's Livery Stables, the Surry ſide of Weſtminſter bridge, where I learned that the King was wounded between the fourth and fifth rib; that the dagger had penetrated the liver, but that the King was not dead.

THESE were glorious tidings. Both my Sovereign and my property were alive! I haſtened joyfully in a coach to St James's, where the proper authentic intelligence was put into my hands, and *five lines* of the Gazette

Gazette told me the ſimple fact of the King's life being attempted by one poor madwoman. Thus, in its way from London to Dover, did the ſtory magnify itſelf into an aſſaſſination by Mr. Fox, a murder by an Indian Princeſs, a rebellion by a Ruſſian Princeſs, a maſſacre by ſmugglers, a butchery of all the Royal Family by a gypſey, and a general ſlaughter of the Houſe of Hanover by twenty aſſaſſins.

Such is the force of a travelling ſtory! and happy is it that every man in England can now laugh at the above idle reports, the danger being paſt, and the King ſecure in the attachment of his people. And well ſecured he is in a land of liberty, whilſt the minds of his ſubjects feel the power of juſtice, and their ſenſes acknowledge the bleſſings of reaſon.

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